

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

October 3, 2011 – 3:00 PM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROWAN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
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Present: Chad Mitchell, Chairman
Carl Ford, Vice-Chairman
Jon Barber, Member
Raymond Coltrain, Member
Jim Sides, Member

County Manager Gary Page, Clerk to the Board Carolyn Athey and County Attorney Jay Dees were present. Finance Director Leslie Heidrick was absent.

Chairman Mitchell convened the meeting at 3:00 pm.

Commissioner Barber provided the Invocation and also led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commissioner Barber moved, Commissioner Sides seconded and the vote to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2011 Commission Meeting passed unanimously.

CONSIDER ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

CONSIDER DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

Commissioner Sides made a motion to remove item B from the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Coltrain questioned the reason for removing the item and Commissioner Sides said there were problems with the dates.

Chairman Mitchell added that there was a technicality with the dates.

Commissioner Coltrain said he had no problem supporting the motion as long as it did not have negative effects on the auctioneer and the schedule.

Upon being put to a vote, the motion on the floor carried unanimously

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Sides moved, Commissioner Barber seconded and the vote to approve the agenda passed unanimously.

1. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Barber moved approval of the Consent Agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ford and passed unanimously.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

A. Proclamation for Fire Prevention Week October 9-15, 2011

WHEREAS, the County of Rowan is committed to ensuring the safety and security of all those living in and visiting our county; and

WHEREAS, fire is a serious public safety concern both locally and nationally, and homes are the locations where people are at greatest risk from fire; and

WHEREAS, roughly 3,000 people die as a result of home fires and burns, more than 200,000 individuals are seen in the nation's emergency rooms for burn injuries; and

WHEREAS, thermal burns outnumber scalds nearly two-to-one, but for children ages five and under, scalds outnumber burns roughly two-to-one; and

WHEREAS, cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries, while heating equipment and smoking are the leading causes of home fire deaths; and

WHEREAS, Rowan County's first responders are dedicated to reducing the occurrence of home fires and home fire injuries through prevention and protection education; and

WHEREAS, Rowan's residents are responsive to public education measures and are able to take personal steps to increase their safety from fire, especially in their homes; and

WHEREAS, residents who have planned and practiced a home fire escape plan are more prepared and will therefore be more likely to survive a fire; and

WHEREAS, the 2011 Fire Prevention Week theme, "Protect Your Family From Fire" effectively serves to remind us all of the simple actions we can take to stay safer from fire year round during Fire Prevention Week.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Rowan County Board of Commissioners, does hereby proclaim October 9-15, 2011 as Fire Prevention Week throughout this County, and urges all people of Rowan County to protect their homes and families by heeding the important safety messages of Fire Prevention Week 2011, and to support the many public safety activities and efforts of the emergency services agencies in the County.

B. Resolution Authorizing Sale of Surplus Property (*this item was deleted from the agenda*)

C. Declaration of Official Intent to Reimburse Expenditures

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Chairman Mitchell opened the Public Comment Period to entertain comments from any citizens wishing to address the Board. With no one coming forward, Chairman Mitchell closed the Public Comment Period.

3. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF HOUSING PROGRAM POLICIES

Planning and Development Director Ed Muire reported that the County had received notification from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA) that its grant applications for both the Single Family Rehabilitation (SFR) and Urgent Repair Program (URP) funded by their agency had been awarded. Mr. Muire said the SFR Program would provide \$160,000 for substantial rehabilitation and the URP Program will provide \$75,000 for minor, but critical home repairs. Both housing programs will be eligible to owner occupied homes in Rowan County excluding those located within the city limits of Kannapolis and Salisbury.

Mr. Muire explained that unlike previous SFR grant cycles, NCHFA has restructured the SFR 2011 Program to offer a reduced initial grant amount for participating jurisdictions and upon successful completion of three (3) units, the County may apply for additional funds from the loan pool maintained by NCHFA. Under program guidelines, the maximum amount of funding utilized on a home in this program is \$45,000. Allowable administrative costs associated with the grant are \$29,700.

Mr. Muire said the County's URP11 Program may provide up to \$6,000 per unit for home repairs of an urgent nature such as window replacement, roof replacement, handicapped ramps, etc. and anticipates serving fourteen (14) units. Allowable administrative costs associated with the grant are \$8,400.

Mr. Muire said Hobbs Upchurch and Associates (HUA) prepared the applications for the grant programs on behalf of the County and Staff recommended HUA be awarded contracts to administer the programs in conjunction with HOME programs currently in effect.

Participation in the programs requires the County to adopt policy documents for assistance, procurement and budget. Mr. Muire said Exhibit A in the agenda packet contained the applicable documents for the SFR 2011 and Exhibit B contains those associated with URP11. These administration policies for the programs were developed by HUA and have been approved by the NCHFA.

Mr. Muire suggested that the Board adopt each of the policies contained in Exhibits A and B under separate motions and authorize Chairman Mitchell to sign each policy document. Mr. Muire also suggested that the Board authorize Chairman Mitchell to sign contracts with HUA for administration of the grants upon their satisfactory review by the Finance Director.

Commissioner Sides moved approval of Exhibit A, the Housing Program Policies for the SFR11 Program and to include the Assistance Policy, Procurement Policy and the Budget Ordinance. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Coltrain and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sides moved to adopt the Housing Program Policies for the URP11 Program and to include the Assistance Policy, Procurement Policy and the Budget Ordinance. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ford and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sides moved to authorize Chairman Mitchell to sign the contracts with HUA for administration of the grants upon satisfactory review by the Finance Director. Chairman Mitchell asked if the motion included authorization for the Chairman to sign Exhibits A and B and Commissioner Sides responded yes.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Coltrain and carried unanimously.

4. COST OF BIRTHDAY BENEFIT OPTION FOR EMPLOYEES

County Manager Gary Page reported that in 2009, it was determined that an unpaid furlough day saved the County \$125,000. Should the Board of Commissioners wish to reward all full-time employees of Rowan County with their birthday off, one could argue it cost the tax payers either \$41,665 or \$125,000.

If all employees took their birthday off at varying dates of the year, any public safety employee, such as the Sheriff's Department, EMS, or 911 dispatchers, would have to have a replacement paid extra for their day off. These employees make up 1/3 of our total staff or 1/3 of \$125,000. Mr. Page said one could argue it cost the County \$41,665.

Since the other 2/3 of our employees are not public safety in nature, their absence from the job merely costs the public their access to that employee for one (1) day out of the year. The funds for these employees are already budgeted for the year, so there are no additional funds needed to balance the lost days of employment.

One could argue that the birthday off cost the tax payer the same as it saved in 2009 with the savings from the furlough day - \$125,000.

If the Board of Commissioners wishes to reward the employees for good work over the past three (3) years, then you could give them three (3) paid birthdays off in exchange for the three (3) furlough days in 2009. Four years from now, should the BOC revisit this issue, it would be their job to continue or discontinue the birthday off benefit.

Commissioner Barber moved to grant employees three (3) annual leave days that will cost the County no money in exchange for the three (3) furlough days the County employees were required to take in the spring of 2009. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Coltrain. Commissioner Coltrain added that it was up to the employee and the workload of the department to determine when the days would be utilized. Commissioner Coltrain said the County did not incur any cost for providing employees with the option for days off.

Commissioner Barber highlighted the reasoning for his support of the motion.

Commissioner Sides said he would vote against the motion and he highlighted the reasoning for his position on the issue.

Commissioner Ford said he could not support the motion. Commissioner Ford preferred to put the issue off until the next budget year at which time he felt the Board could consider a one-time bonus for employees.

Chairman Mitchell supported the birthday option; however, he preferred to give the issue consideration after the County received its audit and learned of the final state of the County's finances for the 2011 budget year.

Commissioner Mitchell moved to table the motion to a point after the County received its final audit report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ford.

Chairman Mitchell said if the County could not give a bonus, he had no problem supporting the birthday option. Chairman Mitchell said he would rather give a bonus if the County was able to do so; however, he felt the birthday option was a reasonable compromise between a raise, a bonus or nothing.

The motion to table the issue passed 3-2 with Commissioners Coltrain and Barber dissenting.

5. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF NEW 911 COMMUNICATION CENTER DESIGN

County Manager Gary Page presented a cost estimate and proposed floor plan for the new 911 Communicators Center (Center). The floor plan was for 8,513 square feet and included office and dispatch space for the City of Salisbury staff. The square foot cost was \$170.

Mr. Page reported that the total cost of the project was \$1,686,000 and included 7.25% for architectural fees, a 5% contingency and additional funds for site preparation. Mr. Page said the proposed site was approximately 4 acres located on Old Concord Road, near the Emergency Management offices and owned by the County. Mr. Page said the site was split by a natural drainage ditch, which would require additional grading and piping of water; the architects indicated this should not be a problem.

Mr. Page discussed the background for the project thus far and said the County was on track with what had been promised to the taxpayers two (2) years ago. Mr. Page said the County was authorized to spend \$12 million but so far the project was \$2 million under budget due to lower prices on radios, the installation of a tower by the State, and the possible location of an antenna on a tower owned by the City of Kannapolis.

Mr. Page said the new building would accommodate the County staff, and possibly the City of Salisbury's (City) telecommunicators.

Chairman Mitchell said the City currently performed its own 911 dispatch function and he asked if the County would be required to perform the dispatch for the City if requested. Mr. Page responded yes and explained that the subscriber fees collected are used to dispatch police, fire, Rescue Squad, Emergency Services and volunteer fire departments. Mr. Page said the County currently provided dispatch service for all the municipalities with the exception of the Salisbury Police. Mr. Page said if the City asked the County to take over dispatching for its police department, the County would have to assume those duties.

Commissioner Sides questioned the cost outline in the agenda packet, which listed furniture for the new 911 Center coming from Fund 202 and Telecommunications Director Rob Robinson responded that Fund 202 was the subscriber fees paid from cell phones and landlines. Mr. Robinson said the additional furniture for 2013 would come from the General Fund. Mr. Page added that the figure for the furniture was capped at approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000. Mr. Page said if the project came in under budget, the County would try to use the remaining funds for the furniture.

In response to a query from Commissioner Ford, Mr. Robinson discussed the 4-acre property option for a tower site. Mr. Robinson said the property owner refused to sell the property any less than in 4-acre tracts. Mr. Robinson said the property owner was waiting on an answer as to whether the County wished to purchase the land.

Mr. Page felt the County needed to move forward with an option on the property.

Commissioner Sides made a motion to move forward with the project at the stated cost and that the County contact the owner of the property and take an option on the property. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ford.

Chairman Mitchell said the current design showed extra telecommunicator desks and he inquired as to how many telecommunicators there currently were. Mr. Robinson said the County currently had six (6) dispatch positions and the new design was for eight (8). Mr. Robinson said the City wished to add five (5) stations. Mr. Robinson said sixteen (16) stations were for long-term growth.

Chairman Mitchell asked how many telecommunicators the State recommended for the County and Mr. Robinson said seven (7). Mr. Robinson said the number of telecommunicators also affected the insurance rating for homes.

Commissioner Ford asked if the City was performing a dispatch service it was not mandated to provide and Mr. Robinson said yes. Mr. Robinson said the City did not dispatch fire calls.

Commissioner Coltrain said when a citizen in Salisbury calls 911 with a need for police, the call first goes to the County and is then transferred to Salisbury to dispatch the police. Commissioner Coltrain said there was delay in getting to the police. Mr. Robinson added that if it was determined an ambulance was needed, the call must then be transferred back to the County. Mr. Robinson said it would be a positive to have all dispatchers working in one room.

Commissioner Coltrain pointed out that the consolidation would save the City over \$400,000 per year.

Upon being put to a vote, the motion on the floor passed unanimously.

6. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Finance Director Leslie Heidrick presented the following budget amendments for the Board's consideration:

- Senior Services – To adjust ROAP budget to agree with State budget - \$68,499
- Sheriff's Office – Recognize funds made available by Justice Assistance Grant - \$13,008
- Social Services – Revise expenditures/revenues based on funding authorizations from State: Adult Day Care, Child Day Care Payments, Child Day Care administration, TANF Domestic Violence, Social Services Block Grant, TANF to SSBG, Low Income Energy Assistance Administration, Adult Homes Special, In-Home Services, and NC Health Choice. Piedmont Behavioral has agreed to let the County give DSS part of their funding to cover the cost of managing approximately 29 additional guardianship cases at \$2,000 each. With these additional revenues, DSS proposed to fund up to 4,000 of temporary social worker staff time in Child Protective Services; up to 4,000 hours of temporary Income Maintenance Caseworker I staff time in Family and Children's Medicaid and Food and Nutrition Services. DSS would hire three (3) CPS Social Workers, one (1) in Food and Nutrition; two (2) in Family and Children's Medicaid (funded 50% with federal funds). The six (6) staff would be limited to 1,000 hours each. If additional temporary staff are needed after the allotted work hours, DSS would hire others for the remaining available hours - \$222,409

Commissioner Coltrain moved approval of the budget amendments as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ford and passed unanimously.

7. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BOARD APPOINTMENTS

ADULT CARE HOME ADVISORY COMMITTEE

An application was submitted for consideration by Jena Hare for reappointment.

The term would be for three (3) years beginning October 1, 2011 and expiring September 30, 2014.

Commissioner Ford nominated Jena Hare for reappointment and the nomination passed unanimously.

JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL

Bonnie Harrell submitted an application for the Substance Abuse Professional appointment. If approved, the term would be for two (2) years, beginning October 1, 2011 and expiring June 30, 2013.

Lynn Richards has been serving as an at large member and submitted a letter of resignation.

Commissioner Barber nominated Bonnie Harrell for appointment and the nomination passed unanimously.

Commissioner Barber moved, Commissioner Coltrain seconded and the vote to accept the resignation of Lynn Richards carried unanimously.

ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The following applications were submitted for consideration for one vacancy:

- Dave Redden, for reappointment
- Krista Osterweil

The term would be for two (2) years beginning October 1, 2011 and expiring August 31, 2013.

Commissioner Coltrain nominated Dave Redden. Commissioner Coltrain said Krista Osterweil was affiliated with the Hampton Inn and he pointed out the Sales Manager at the Hampton Inn was already serving on the Tourism Development Authority.

Commissioner Sides said he could not support the nomination for Dave Redden since he was not a resident of Rowan County.

Commissioner Sides nominated Krista Osterweil.

The reappointment of Mr. Redden failed 2-3 with Commissioners Mitchell, Ford and Sides dissenting.

The nomination for Ms. Osterweil passed 3-2 with Commissioners Coltrain and Barber dissenting.

Chairman Mitchell said he supported Ms. Osterweil since she was a Rowan County resident. Chairman Mitchell said while the residency requirement was not statutorily required, it was the Board's policy to appoint Rowan County residents where possible.

SALISBURY ROWAN HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL

Deborah Scales was appointed March 1, 2011 to fill an unexpired term ending October 31, 2011. Ms. Scales submitted an application for consideration to be appointed for a full term.

The term would be for three (3) years beginning November 1, 2011 and expiring October 31, 2014.

Commissioner Cottrain nominated Deborah Scales and the nomination passed unanimously.

SHELTER MINISTRIES BOARD

The Shelter Ministries Board requested Commissioner Raymond Coltrain be reappointed to serve on its Board of Directors.

The term would be for one (1) year beginning September 30, 2011 and expiring September 30, 2012.

Commissioner Ford nominated Commissioner Coltrain and the nomination passed unanimously.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Barber moved to adjourn at 3:54 pm. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ford and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Athey, CMC, NCCCC
Clerk to the Board/Assistant to the County Manager